1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

821 formations held a deep fascination for them. I understood but little of it, for their Spanish was too broken, and I was unfamiliar with Yaruro. So we spent the evening in quiet conversation and amity, conscious of the soft voices of the women in the background, children, laughter, and always the throbbing roar of the distant bands of 825 howlers which was brought to us by the wind. To the Yaruros the howlers were formerly men.

Landaeta relayed to me questions uppermost in his wife's mind. Did I have a wife in my own country? Did I have any children? Why had they not come with me? Once in Brazil I had been asked similar questions by another naked primitive fold, and I had answered truthfully that I had neither wife nor children. I remember their confusion and amazement. In their eyes I was a great man, and therefore I should have had many wives and many children. It is certain that they really never believed or understood my answer. So, in this case, not wanting to make extensive explanations about our civilization, which not only does not insist that men and women marry, but even makes it very difficult for them to do so, I lied, answering that I was married and had one son. Of course I had to describe both wife and boy to the inquisitive women. They wanted to know if her skin was the same color as mine, and her hair as white as mine, and what did she wear on her body? Also, they made me 784 promise that some day I would bring my wife and boy to them, so that the women who, because of social taboos, could not converse directly with me, would be able to do so with my wife.

821 As we talked of these things, falling stars played in the heavens, "messengers of Kuma" according to the Yaruros, the big dipper swung higher, and the southern crosses began their journeys. For a while the wind died down, and the monkeys were heard no more. Always responsive to the world in which they live, the Yaruros became silent and still. And then, as the moon rose above the hills of Guiana, Landaeta disappeared in the darkness to return later and begin his singing.

796 Unlike our own religious ceremonies, there was no attempt at cre-
781 ating artificial seriousness. The children played about noisily under the very nose of the shaman without reproof, and the adults talked happily. The imminent communion with the gods was an event of festive proportions and no restraints were put on normal and natural behavior before joyous events.

533 There was no dancing on this night, in deference to me, for I could not participate in it, but we sat in a semicircle and sang after the shaman.

787 Itciai arrived and I was helped to sit close to the shaman. Appar-
791 ently Itciai was talking about me, referred to as "the Man." I lighted a cigarette and held it to the shaman's mouth. Without interrup-

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

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not allowed to the neighboring peoples, such as the Otomacos or the Achaguas. The social and linguistic bonds seem to be strong enough to cause the Yaruros to recognize themselves as a distinct people.

FOODS

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In the llanos food is not plentiful except in and along the rivers; but the foraging activities of the Yaruros are restricted to the banks of the Capanaparo and Sinaruco Rivers for another reason. The hunting of land animals has practically stopped for fear that they will be accused by the ranchers of killing cattle. In recent years the activities of the crocodile hunters have ruthlessly destroyed the game, and since such hunters live on the country they have consumed a portion of the available quantity of game on which the Yaruros depended for a livelihood.

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In the dry season game is concentrated along the rivers and the water holes. It is considerably easier to hunt it then than in the rainy season, when it is dispersed over the plains. The turtle, which is found in great quantities in the waters of the Orinoco and its tributaries, suffers a yearly mass hunt and destruction which has its effect on the food supply of the Yaruros. It has been discovered that the turtle fat and eggs will produce a fine grade of oil which sells for a high price. The result is that the breeding grounds of the turtles become yearly a scene of great activity and destruction. No one knows how many thousands of turtles and turtle eggs are gathered and converted into this oil late in the month of April.

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The meat staple of the Yaruros is the *Crocodilus babu*, a small crocodile which grows to about 6 feet long. This animal is hunted daily and eaten in its entirety. Its meat is esteemed above that of any other animal. On the other hand, the cayman, sought for its hide, is not hunted as a rule by the Yaruros. Perhaps this meat is not as savory as that of the babu, but the Yaruros give the reason that the large crocodile represents a race of mankind to which they are related. So that although occasionally it may be hunted for the price that its hide may bring, it is never eaten and never hunted consistently.

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Next to the crocodile, turtles, including the matamata and tortoise, are to be found broiling over the fires in every Yaruro camp, and if they are not broiling they can be seen in shallow pools of water with their forelegs tied to their hindlegs. In this way they can keep alive but cannot walk away. The armadillo is seldom obtained and other meats appear occasionally on the diet of the Yaruros. Fishing is resorted to when neither crocodiles nor turtles are obtainable. The caribe, which is the piranha of Brazil, is esteemed but little. The tonino, which can be seen gracefully playing in the water or can be heard snorting in the rivers at night, is never hunted. It also is

1: Petrullo E-3 (1939-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

culture or themselves against a superior culture and ruthless "civilized" bandits. Their only consolation is Kuma and the Land of Kuma.

Nevertheless, being realists they not only continue their daily activities of hunting and gathering foods, but also in finding daily solace through their environment and the shamanistic contact with Kuma. The Yaruro is nature conscious. Perhaps his lonely existence has made him ecstatically responsible to the world about him, for often they talked of the beauty of various phenomena; but stronger than any such feeling is their sense of intimate relationship with the sun, the moon, the stars, their animal life. The falling stars at night are interpreted by them to be messengers sent by Kuma to encourage her people, the Yaruros; the moon is friendly, and on moonless nights the stars represent the crowds of their ancestors who live with Kuma. The wind blows incessantly and it blows to them the roar of the araguatos (the howlers), which, to them, represent distant relatives once human beings, but changed into monkeys by life in the trees at the time of the great flood; the toninos, frolicking at night in the water, are also another race who failed to climb the rope which Hatchawa let down to bring his people to the surface. It is in such a friendly world that the Yaruro literally sits, listens, and looks, almost communing with his environment. Perhaps it is not out of place to mention at this point that this reaction on the part of the Yaruros is not difficult to understand, that perhaps we ought not to rationalize this attitude of the Yaruro entirely on the basis of superstition or religious ideas; anyone who has lived on the plains, exposed day and night to nature, soon loses any feeling of lonesomeness. This response on the part of the Yaruros is shared by the llaneros, who do not seem to be so perfectly at ease as when they are alone in the plains.

THE YARURO UNIVERSE

According to the Yaruros the world has experienced a series of metamorphoses. Some of the events which have transformed the world from its original form are attributed to the direct intervention of the various gods and races of mankind, but others remain unexplainable.

How much of Yaruro cosmic ideas have been borrowed from the missionaries it is difficult to say at this point. Missionaries have been among them from time to time but the Yaruros have been abandoned so completely so many times that the result and confusion is difficult if not impossible to unravel—a thing which can be done only when we have thorough descriptive studies of the various tribes of the Columbian plains and the tribes of Guiana. The comparative ma-

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 S519 Yaruro S519

781 Of great importance is the fact that the Yaruros live in a world which they understand perfectly. At night they watch the heavens for signs from their gods. Each night they read a new chapter in a great story book. During the day the winds, the skies, the sun, have much to tell them, and they watch and listen eagerly. Their world is not one of fear but one which, as created by Kuma, is excessively friendly and hopeful. Terror has been introduced by the white man.

771 For every species of plant and animal life a gigantic counterpart exists in the Land of Kuma. Originally the plants and animals, which have been domesticated by the white man, were given to the Yaruros, but the size of the horse and cattle frightened the Yaruros so much that they refused to mount one or tame the other. The white man seized the opportunity which has since made him master of the Yaruro country. However, they have no explanation for the superiority of the white race except sheer wickedness. This superiority is so startling sometimes that the Yaruros feel that the white man in some way must be closely affiliated with gods, good or bad. The appearance of the white man on the plains of Apure is a legendary event. A white man, the Yaruros say, appeared on a huge horse. He was covered with foul sores and destroyed everything in his path. The Yaruros are content to hunt and cultivate the soil. The result is that the civilized peoples raise crops, store them, but the Yaruros are condemned to wander about hunting for a daily dinner.

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825 Many of the animal species, natural formations and constellations are to the Yaruros metamorphosed races of man. One explanation for the monkeys, especially the araguatos (the howlers), is that they are the descendants of a group of people who, to save themselves, climbed to the top of a tree during the time of the flood. The caymans represent another race of men who failed to take advantage of Hatchawa's rope to be lifted out of the hole in the ground. The toninos also are a race of metamorphosed humans.

182 773 The Yaruro, according to their conception of mankind, were Kuma's chosen people. They were created first of all the Indian tribes and that is why they were given the open plains to live in with an open sky overhead so that they might be in close touch with Kuma day and night. The Guahibos, on the other hand, or as the Yaruros called them, the Tciricoi, the forest people, were created last and occupy an inferior position.

776 774 In addition to playing a purely religious role, the gods function as ethical teachers in every shamanistic performance, a function which is shared by the spirits who are close relatives of the living Yaruros. It is they who visit their living descendants and speak through the body of the shaman, correct abuses, scold the evildoers, and praise the good.

4: Leeds E-5 (1958) 1960 SS19 Yaruro SS19

Christian Venezuelans, which lies between the two lower celestial domes and existed prior to Ku'maⁿ.

It is to be noted that Ku'maⁿ was not responsible for creating her fellow primordial gods. She is not an omnipotent creator but is fundamentally limited to creating other-world and hither-world things familiar to the Yaruro. She exists in an independent but loosely coordinate status with other celestial beings or phenomena like Thunder, Sun, Moon, the stars, the rainbow, and possibly Dios — the prototype for personal status among the Yaruro. Furthermore, despite wide variation in creation myths, the fact stands out, too, that she must almost equal honors with Poa'naⁿ in the creation of all that is vital to the Yaruro in the hither-world in a creational division of labor closely paralleling the division of labor found in the actual economy. Further, Ku'maⁿ and Poa'naⁿ, by the link of marriage, provide a prototype for the essential productive and distributional unit, the household. Hachawa, their son according to some informants, and Iciai, Poa'naⁿ s'ster's son, both boys at the time of the creation, contribute little and are as much nuisance as help until they have matured, an apt reflection of the position of children in Yaruro economy. Today Poa'naⁿ and Ku'maⁿ seem preeminent in status among the gods, but at the same time are definitely merely *primi inter pares*, occupying the position of more experienced elders within the community of the gods, each of whom acts autonomously according to his own dictates.

The community of the gods is again prototypic for Yaruro hither-world life. Each god and his land constitutes a sort of village community populated by the god or gods, by dead *pumé*, by dead animals, and by the regular other-worldly animal population especially jaguars in human form and dress. The human-like inhabitants of the other-world eat, drink, dance, have sex relations, and visit from god's land to god's land. They enter into the web of kinship which ties the gods to each other, to the dead Yaruro, and to the live *pumé* of the hither-world in complex, if varying, genealogical connections. Even the great jaguar god, T'ó whose bailiwick is the first celestial dome and whose main task, under the general direction of Ku'maⁿ, is to cure, is considered distantly related and of the family of Poa'naⁿ. A number of animal species are similarly distantly related, but like those Yaruro who cannot be fitted into the kinship system, are merely connected to us nominally. The gods, the dead, and the live *pumé* equally observe kinship obligations. Thus kinship and visits among the autonomous lands of the gods are the chief ties holding the four other-worlds together, a prototype for Yaruro village and social structure. (3)

However, in relationship to the living, Ku'maⁿ is 'our chief'. More than any other god, she is turned to for advice, for ethical reaffirmations, and for fulfilment of needs. It is first to Ku'maⁿ bright and golden land that the *pumé* go at death, during unconsciousness, in dreams, and during the religious ceremonies, the *tonghés*. The other lands are visited later and are less important in the other-worldly journeys made by the living. The dead of Ku'maⁿ land are the first to be called upon by the shaman when, during the *tonghés*, he arrives in the other-worlds. He asks them, as well as Ku'maⁿ and the other gods, to

(3) Eliade (1954) emphasizes this prototypic quality of "primitive" ideologies throughout the book.

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O Y 775 776 way which leads to the other world it will meet after the village of the tiyo of Iʃiai, at the left, on the same side, the tiyo of the Otomaco. They sang and danced (shamanistic ceremony) during the day when Kuma and Iʃiai were still living on earth. When they ran off into the other world they continued to sing and dance but at night. During their songs they walked, the old men of past times used to say."

Y 533 539 Pedro Ramón Camacho completed his account with a quatrain of this song which had been repeated to him by a grandfather, but the meaning of which he did not know:

gwaǩarka hihi gwaǩarka hihi
gwaǩarka hihi gwaǩarka hihi
pideruba pideruba pideruba hihi
pideruba pideruba pideruba hihi

Y 773 825 136 The Otomaco are presented in Yaruro legends as being in the beginning three animals: the mono (15), the araguato (16),

15. Monkey (Cebus nigrivittatus), in Venezuelan.

16. Howling monkey (Alouetta ursina), in Venezuelan.

and the chigüíre (17).

17. Capybara, large amphibious rodent (Hydrochoerus hydrochoeris), in Venezuelan.

Y 773 825 The transformation of the Otomaco into monos and araguatos seems to have occurred at the time of the flood unleashed by Iʃiai to cleanse the world of all the moral disorder which reigned there. Some Otomaco took refuge in the trees

/11 cont./
773 out of reach of the waters, having refused to shelter themselves
825 on an elevated knoll as Iɟiai ordered them to do. The latter, to punish them, condemned them and all their family to become "monos and araguatos who will eat henceforth," he told them, "leaves, fruit, chiga (18), etc...."

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18. Chigo grain (Campsiandra comosa), from which the Yaruro apparently extract flour.

The origin of the chigüíre is illustrated on its part by the text reproduced next:

1st version (literal translation)

"Once upon a time, when the Kuma still lived on earth, an old Otomaco pumę (19). The Kuma had a little gourd

19. In Yaruro: man or Yaruro.

full of mosquitos (20) and plaga (21) and one day the Otomaco

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20. Diurnal wounding gnats (Similium haemapotum Malloch), in Venezuelan.

21. Nocturnal mosquitoes, in Venezuelan.

asked her: "What is this, grandmother?" "No, son," she answered him, "do not try to uncork it because they are Iɟiai's sons. If you uncork it, /12/ the little beasts will eat you." The Otomaco, the old pumę, was stubborn and in an inattentive moment of the Kuma uncorked the little receptacle near a river. In an instant he was covered with bites and threw himself into the water. Then Iɟiai said to him that for

Y /12 cont./
773 having been disobediant he was going to serve as food for the
825 pumę's and be transformed into chigüíre. In the same instant
he was transformed into chigüíre."

2nd version (literal translation)

"The Kuma had a little receptacle filled with plaga and all kinds of zancudos (22). A pumę, the chigüíre, the

Y
[134] 22. Anopheles mosquitoes (Cellia argyritarsis), in Venezuelan.

Otomaco asked Kuma what kind of animal was in the receptacle. She answered that they were dangerous zancudos and that he must not open it because that would present danger. The Otomaco said: "I am going to open it." Then he opened the receptacle and thus the plaga came. If he had not opened it there would have been no plaga. When he had opened the receptacle, the mosquitoes began to bite him. The Otomaco threw himself into the water because he could not stand the bites and was transformed into chigüíre because he had disobeyed. Ijiai said to him: "You did not want to obey, you will be transformed into chigüíre which the pumę's will kill to feed upon." The bristles of the chigüíres are the zancudos. The present chigüíres are the sons of those who have disobeyed."

O
101 Otomaco territory seems to have been situated north of
131 that of the Yaruro, around the place where they supposedly were created: Los Caballos, near the Río Cunaviche. "All these dunes," Pedro Ramón Camacho said to us word for word, and at the same time his hand made a one-quarter turn of the horizon toward the north, "were once covered with Otomaco
O 172 villages. The remains of pimpina (23), of plates, of
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173 23. A pitcher of porous earthenware used as a water-cooler in Venezuelan.